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Political Papers on

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1877

POLITICAL PAPERS

ON

SOUTH AFRICAN TOPICS.

Port Elizabeth :

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1877.

STILL AM I BUSIE BOOKS ASSEMBLING
FOR TO HAVE PLENTIE TIS A LOUESOME THING



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OUR JUNIOR MEMBER.

Some men stand out in bold relief from their fellows, by the marked distinctness of their lives, and their character. In literature, in trade, and in politics, this country has some of whom colonists have felt proud, and continue to admire. The independence and honesty of John Fairbairn, as the Father of our Press, and the Founder of our Liberty, were such as to place him in the front rank, with all good men. In the next rank, Eastern and Western men alike recognised in William Hume, another whose industry, energy, perseverance, influence, and independence were marking him out as one to whom the country would owe the honour due to a "son of the soil;" one of such political promise as to identify him with the strong, and the leading, in the colony's political advancement. Hardworking, enthusiastic, a Separationist of the Separationists, the East, in him, expected the realisation of uncompromising adherence to Eastern parties and Eastern politics, for Eastern welfare. With his word for his bond, and a courage which no one doubted, his constituents looked upon him as impervious to influences which have been the political death of many a good man's fame. True and fast, they confided in him as they have seldom done with others. Knowing his politics they exacted no pledges, but returned him, under the impression that he knew them and their views as well as, they believed, they knew him and his opinions.

But events have shown that they did not quite understand each other. Mr. Paterson has defined the well-known axiom of representation, as applied to himself, namely, that a holder of a people's suffrages is their representative, so long as he acts in accord with their expressed, and even clearly-implied, opinions, with liberty upon all questions on which there has been no tacit or open agreement, to act as he may think best without reference to his constituents. These two doctrines are the guide of members of the Imperial Parliament, and we venture to assert that no member of the House of Commons, whatever his status, social, political, or official, would, for one moment, venture to disregard it, and determine to retain his seat. In

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Mr. Hume's election, the grave error was committed, of not coming to a clear understanding upon this view. No compact having been formally made, he holds that, once a representative, you take him, as people marry—for better or for worse—yet only so long as *he* may choose to hold your votes. But he overlooks the fact familiar to lawyers, that to every contract there must be at least two parties; and that when once it is complete, one cannot break from it without the other's consent. A portion of the contract is representation (not *mis*-representation) of a constituency. We are borne out in this view by the practice of the House of Commons. There, as May puts it, it is a settled principle of Parliamentary law, that a member, after he is duly chosen, cannot relinquish his seat, but a way is provided for him to evade the law. That does not abolish or impugn the contract principle. Cease to act up to its terms, and in honour the party contravening it is bound to withdraw, if it be the wish of the other contracting party. Mr. Hume would insist upon this in trade, and in law, if in any matter of consequence his interests were at all damaged. Now, in all questions where his voice and vote have been required in Parliament, during his brief career there, he has been free and unfettered in his action, by the electors up to the early session of this year. Like others, he was there surprised by the mine that was sprung upon him, by the Carnarvon Despatch and the Molteno Government. But, accustomed to surprises, no one expected him to be so thrown off his guard as to fall plump into the arms of the Government, who received him tenderly and most lovingly, and, with him there for a moment, magnetised him into a new form for his constituents. To their bewildering astonishment, they saw him vote, as they declare, in violation of all his political antecedents, yet hoped, in spite of his adverse vote, that he had done so either in a moment of weakness, of justifiable anger, or under a mistake. The question at issue was, without exception, the most important put to the Legislature for years—and seeing how staunch an advocate he had been, how self-denying, laborious, and generous his conduct to secure for them and for thousands of others, more of local self-government, they could not discover on what rational plea he had sharply rejected the very first answer given to a portion of his life's labours and prayers. The session passed—he returned to Port Elizabeth. At a public meeting, such as no one had seen before in the borough, he met the public face to face, and, while all admired his outspokenness, there were not ten who did not deplore the exposition of his reasons for voting as he had, and opposing the Conference. His constituents, nevertheless, while pained were not vexed, but confided still in his honour, and what they believed would be his sense of the position. They at last learned that, seeing it was the wish of the people, he would vote for the Conference, “with proper safeguards.” Had he told them plainly to the contrary, they would at once have requested him to make way for a gentleman who would be in

accord with them upon this greatly important issue. But those who knew him believed from his own lips he would meet the twice publicly expressed, clear wishes of his constituency, that he should represent their views, and support their largely signed petitions to Parliament, in favour of the Conference, and of this Colony being represented thereat. How grievously he disappointed them in the moment of trial is but too well known. His vote again with the Ministry, with Mr. Paterson on the opposite side, was the virtual disfranchising of those who returned him to Parliament. Now, "more in sorrow than in anger," they claim, that unless he voluntarily tender the resignation of his seat, which some assert is his intention, only a public meeting can bring it about. That Mr. Hume may not have the voice of a Committee alone to tell him the people's views, let their voice in public meeting be heard. Then let the questions be distinctly put to the electors and the public generally—"Does Mr. William Hume still retain your confidence as your Representative in the House of Assembly? Is it your wish that he should resign, or pledge himself to vote for the Conference and Confederation? Is your answer in each instance to be conveyed to that gentleman—if so, when, and by whom? And when, and where, shall we meet again to render you whatever reply Mr. Hume may return?" If this fair course be adopted, Mr. Hume, we are assured, will not hesitate to give a prompt answer; If the subject be allowed to drop, and no open action be taken, Port Elizabeth stultifies itself, gives the lie to its antecedents, endorses the vote of its junior member, the rude action of the Ministry, and declares to Lord Carnarvon that we do not look to him for relief, and to raise this part of the world to the proud position of a South African Dominion.

The foregoing view of the Representative's relation to his constituents and the Parliament is not new,—nor merely ours. It is recognised by the foremost and most esteemed thinkers and statesmen of the age; and even men of mediocrity, act upon it. Mr. Hume, may, therefore, have no difficulty in accepting it, and so consult the opinions and the sentiments of the electors, or he will jeopardise the excellent reputation which his tried political career has deservedly won for him, and to which we and thousands more would wish him to add new lustre.

MR. HUME'S VOTE.

A community never respects a man whose politics are of chameleon hue, ever doubtful, ever changing. His motives are at once suspected, and his acts are repeatedly questioned. The moral status of such a man is never high. His character suffers for his political shiftiness, no matter how clever, how cool, how self-possessed, how bold he may be. Doubt will

cling about him in all he does; and, to use a homely phrase, "the last state of that man is worse than the first," for he receives no thanks even for accidentally virtuous and straightforward deeds. That a people's representative can be in perfect accord with them, however, on all matters of politics, is what no one expects or looks for. He is not a mere delegate; he is *with* them in the majority of questions; in others he acts, for what he believes, the major part of the people require, or he deems best for them. Such an one, being fair, is trusted. The independence which he exercises persistently is admired, even if it is not approved, when it works against a particular aim of his constituency. The chameleon-like politician, on the contrary, being "all things to all men," and to himself "most of all," as an Irishman would say, might manœuvre, but he would not last long. Now, Mr. Hume, who does not happen to take the same view of the all-absorbing question of the hour that his constituents do, is no such dodger. Known for many years by those whom he has represented, under all circumstances, at the Town Council, at the Chamber of Commerce, and in the Separation League, his honesty in politics is not doubted. There was not one who heard him at the demonstration, which was made in the Town Hall on Wednesday, that did not fully accept his statement, namely, that when he opposed Lord Carnarvon's Despatch in the House of Assembly he did so conscientiously. He recorded his vote against it deliberately and fearlessly, although well remembering the part he had taken in the movement to bring about a Separation of the Provinces. We accept his reasons, and respect his motives; but, at the same time, we as heartily regret his vote. And we do so partly on the ground that we believe Mr. Hume has been forgetful of some antecedent measures to which he was a party; and, being affected by the panic which seized the House, he has not yet got over its effects upon his deliberations.

We may refer to one recent and prominent event as a reminder. Among many offices to which Mr. Hume gives his time is that of Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce. In November last he joined others of that institution in framing an address to His Excellency the Governor, Sir Henry Barkly, which concluded with these words:— "The closer connection also of Natal to this country with the Transvaal and Orange Free State is desirable, and we shall rejoice to see it consummated during your Excellency's term of office. Bound up in one strong Confederation, for mutual benefit and support, these States and Colonies would lead up to that civilisation to which the philanthropist and the broad-minded statesman look forward, for the region lying between the Cape Colonies and the Zambesi, and which, all are assured, would be productive of noble results. As one great South African Dominion it would add honour to your Excellency's rule, wealth and power to the British Empire, and lustre to Her Majesty's reign." Mr. Hume, in his official

capacity, formed one of the deputation to present the address to the Governor; he, therefore, as fully committed himself to its sentiments and opinions as if he, individually, pronounced them. He spoke for the mercantile community of Port Elizabeth. Those for whom he then acted were of the audience which he met face to face last Wednesday.

With the feeling of a born South African, who has struggled hard for the advancement of his country, and takes a pride in its prosperity and progress, Mr. Hume, it seems to us, was carried away from the remembrance of what the country asked of him, by an indignant feeling at Lord Carnarvon's seeming dictation and undue interference with the Legislative rights and privileges of the Colonists. Mr. Hume said plainly, that he was with Lord Carnarvon in his desire for the Confederation, but, now that we have responsible Government, his Lordship had no right to interfere as he had, presuming even to name the delegates for the Conference. We believe that Lord Carnarvon never meant his suggestions to be taken as dictation; and we feel with Mr. Froude, as expressed by him in a letter to the Graaff-Reinet, that his Lordship has "unintentionally taken an office upon himself which you (Graaff-Reinet) would have preferred to retain for your Legislature. No one will regret his error more deeply, or will be more anxious to repair it." This plain statement, we are sure, will satisfy Mr. Hume, when he remembers the position in which Mr. Froude now stands to the Imperial Government and to this Colony.

But there was a matter of deeper moment than this, which must have moved Mr. Hume to his opposition, one that will be found in the evidence of Mr. Solomon, on the subject of Federation, as given by him at a Parliamentary inquiry only two years ago—and that is, that he would object to entering a Confederacy when Native Affairs were in agitation, and war with surrounding tribes was imminent. The remembrance of the fact that Sir Garnet Wolseley was on the spot to meet any *émeute* among the Natal tribes; that the Transvaal burghers were out on commando against Ketchwayo; and the contingent prospect of a much wider-spread native rising, were the but too plainly apparent, substantial objections which operated on Mr. Hume's mind, and conjured up weaker matters as grounds for his opposition to the Despatch. The difficulty with Griqualand West was not lost sight of, nor the prospect of a difference, through it, with the Free State. These formed a bundle of troubles, which, he thought, Lord Carnarvon hoped by a Conference, to cast from him, and to leave them, with their consequences, to the Colonists. As they were not of the Colony's seeking he did not ask us to be saddled with the burden of them.

We do not agree with him in these views. We believe in the thorough high-minded integrity of the Secretary of State for the Colonies; and that in his heart he desires to enable the South African States, Provinces, and Colonies to Con-

federate, from the noblest of motives, and the most exalted of aims—that of forming one rich, great, powerful Dominion on the continent of Southern Africa,—one that would raise the Standard of Great Britain higher in the eyes of the world, and give the Cape of Good Hope a worthy place in the rank of nations.

The appearance of Mr. Hume on the platform, in the early part of the meeting, was not only manly, but just what would be expected of a straightforward representative of the people. He did not wait to gather up the opinions of the several speakers, and then time his opposition. He at once threw life into the situation, and placed himself at the mercy of all who were to address the public there that night. We do not agree with Mr. Jones, who said, that, “If Mr. Hume did not represent the free and independent electors they should make him pretty soon, or call on him to resign.” On the contrary, we think that if Mr. Hume feared the effects of a Conference would be prejudicial to the Colony, when the Native affairs, far beyond us, were in chaos and dangerous, while our own were in order, peaceful, and successful, he was bound to say so, and to reject Lord Carnarvon’s Despatch. And doing so he should not be hastily condemned, however much it may be, and is, an undoubted matter of regret; for he has never feared to do that which he has believed to be right, and deemed likely to serve the welfare and happiness of the people.

THE PRESS AND MR. HUME.

In all great questions of public importance the Press is expected to lead the way—be the beacon-light to the people. Without speaking out upon convictions well founded, and in a manner to win confidence, it cannot be respected. It must not shift with every wind that blows—or in moments of disappointment be childish in its wrath, impotent in its anger. A good cause is often injured by such manners. The local Press unitedly condemns Mr. Hume’s vote on the Conference question. We have from the first. But this is the first matter upon which he has taken the side against his constituents, and it should be believed that he had strong reasons for so gravely disappointing them. He told the public on Wednesday that he had voted conscientiously. The *Herald*, on the 25th of last month, in reply to the *Eastern Star*, said:—“Members of Parliament must be allowed to use their own judgment, and vote according to their conscience, or the office will not be sought after by respectable and independent men. A representative of a constituency is something more than a mere proxy, though proxies are frequently allowed considerable latitude of opinion. On the great question of the day representatives should be in accord with their constituents, but it is possible the constituents will not be agreed

among themselves, and the representatives may be also divided in opinion. We should never think of abusing Mr. Hume because he voted with the minority on this question."

At that time Mr. Hume had not trodden upon the corns of the *Herald*, but his heel came down pretty heavily upon its toes at the meeting, hence, we suppose, the following, from one of its leading articles, on the 9th inst.:—"His remarks on 'sentiment' as opposed to the material prosperity of this colony are scarcely worth notice, and only show that in choosing the rôle of legislator and public speaker Mr. Hume has mistaken his vocation.

"After a rather long and very incoherent address, he wound up with an attack upon the Port Elizabeth Press, which he accused of inconsistency, and in proof of the charge read extracts from the *Port Elizabeth Telegraph* and *Eastern Province Herald*, and the telegrams on which they were founded. Now, we have no hesitation in asserting that this was most disingenuous conduct on the part of Mr. Hume, because he knew the circumstances under which those articles were written. He knew they were written upon receipt of the *telegram* from Cape Town announcing the receipt of Lord Carnarvon's despatch, and not upon the despatch itself.

"Mr. Hume has never had credit for any brilliant parts either as statesman or orator, but he has hitherto enjoyed the reputation of being frank and straightforward in his dealings; but we say, the course he adopted last Wednesday night was not straightforward.

"To make, as he thought, a point against 'the Press,' he read what suited himself, and left unread what would have explained to the audience the position taken up by the Port Elizabeth press. And then, Mr. Hume, too clever by half, not content with making the charge against the Press, 'supposed it was to be attributed to the fact that the papers trusted for editorials to chance gentlemen who have leisure to write.' None but a man of Mr. Hume's inexperience of matters connected with the Press would have ventured upon such a silly remark. After Mr. Hume's expression of opinion it can no longer be doubted that he *mis-represented* Port Elizabeth in Parliament.

"On more than one important question last session Port Elizabeth was disfranchised, one of its members voting on one side and the other against him. This is an unpleasant position for the most important commercial town in the Eastern Province to occupy, and one which is not calculated to increase its influence or conduce to its prosperity. On this point Mr. W. Jones, in his plain, as he said, 'good old English' spoke in unmistakeable terms: "It is the electors who are, or ought to be, *independent*, and not the elected."——

These novel notions upon a Member of Parliament's relations to his constituents, and theirs to him, we leave our contemporaries to reconcile. They need neither argument, nor comment

by us—they are so cool, calm, wise, and *very* consistent that they must commend themselves to every dispassionate reader—who loves personalities. But we beg to remark, that as journalists we do not claim to be exempt from the pains and penalties with which we may be visited by public men for tergiversation. And we do not think any of our vocation should sink to contemptible personalities when they do not agree with others. We have something far better to do. Possessing great advantage over public men, we should not abuse that power. No one admires the action of the strong against the weak; and the Press becomes cowardly, and, therefore, unworthy of its high calling, when it permits private spleen to intrude its influence upon the reviews of men in public life, their words and actions.

Mr. Hume's vote, we repeat, we regret, for it was, undoubtedly, a mistake. But, judging him by the standard first laid down in the quotation he gave the meeting, he had a right to vote on his conscience; and, doing so to carry with him the esteem of the public. It would have been better if he had withheld his vote; and, we maintain, he should have done so, had he not been afraid of the Native difficulty. But we excuse it on the ground of the surprise with which he must have been taken. Now we must trust that, when we receive Lord Carnarvon's further despatch on the subject, he will join his colleague in a hearty support of the move for an early Conference of the States, Provinces, and Colonies of South Africa, with a view to establishing, in this quarter of the globe, one great, powerful, and United DOMINION.

THE POLITICAL PRONOUNS.

Of all the writers France has produced, in this nineteenth century, none is more charming in style than the diplomatic, literary, ever delightful—Chateaubriand. With a simple arrogance, known only to French writers, he deals with egotism in a manner that interests us through its childish prominence. To English eyes and English ears it is peculiar. The Historian of the Congress of Verona knew this well; therefore, when his *Memoirs* appeared in the language of "perfidious Albion," he felt it necessary to employ "We," and "I," and to "leave the two pronouns to correct each other." This singularity occurred to our remembrance the moment we read the trenchant, and justly indignant, despatch of January 14th, from Lord Carnarvon. "The two pronouns" have been left to correct each other, viz., the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Sir Henry Barkly with his Cabinet, in such a manner that few Governors would wish repeated.

Reverting to the disrespectful, if not disloyal, tone of the motion, which the Premier placed upon the notice paper

directly after the opening of the Special Session, his Lordship affirms, what we said of it at the time, namely, that Mr. Molteno's language and behaviour therein were without parallel or precedent; the Governor was greatly to blame for this; that they both, while holding the Queen's Commission, had forgotten their duty and their position; and, that, if they were right, "the servants of the Queen in this country (England) would be unworthy of advising the Crown on this or any other subject." His Lordship points also to the violent statement that, an agitation had been created and encouraged by Her Majesty's Government. This, he shows, was directed, most unfairly, against Mr. Froude; and he fully exonerates that gentleman from any charge, which some have been slow to heap upon this disinterested, unselfish, and distinguished man, for whose attention, advocacy, and help, the colonists ought to be, and are eminently proud and grateful. And here, in passing, we may say, there are many who echo his Lordship's words—"If, indeed, he (Mr. Froude) has been misunderstood, and misrepresented, in some quarters, I trust that he will have been well rewarded by the knowledge that he was taking part in no common or insignificant question, and by the consciousness of having done his utmost to render those measures in which he has been engaged really beneficial to all concerned in them, of whatever nationality or race."

Passing on to the attention which the Secretary of State for the Colonies has been scrupulously careful to show to the "Responsible advisers of the Government," he reminds the Governor that he, at least, has been more like a traitor than a loyal subject of the Sovereign; more like a betrayer than a true officer of the Queen, conniving with, instead of withstanding encroachers upon Her prerogatives, and the equally high and exalted ones of the people at large. We did not fail to remind Sir Henry Barkly of this long since, when he persistently sheltered himself behind, and went with 'my Responsible advisers,' and took up the position he did in his last opening speech. Our accusation was thought by some to be severe, but the great majority decided it was just. Now, it is deliberately endorsed by the Queen's Minister, who writes: "I am afraid, however, that it may not, at all times, have been sufficiently remembered that your duties, as High Commissioner, cannot be subordinated to the local policy of your advisers, and that even in matters affecting the Cape alone, *you have obligations to Her Majesty's Government which no Colonial Minister can expect you to overlook.*" We have italicised some of these words, that they may readily catch the eye of those who differed from us—fortunately, they were few, but influential in this matter. Having thus disposed of Mr. Molteno, the Governor, and justified and approved of Mr. Froude's conduct here, Earl Carnarvon analyses Mr. Solomon's motion, and shows that its implications, in part, were quite unfounded. But he lays them by, after explaining that there was no intention, on the part of his Lordship, to set the

Conference aside ; that as the House had decided to assist the Imperial Government in the Diamond Fields and the Free State entanglements, he would gladly accept the resolution as a friendly act, and be glad to see some one, or more, for the Colony, appear at the London conclave with that object, and as early as convenient.

More could not be asked, less was not desirable. The Two Pronouns can then best correct each other ; and South African History will be made to glow with a brighter page than any yet added to it by the Constitution.

WILL ENGLAND BUY IT ?

The lover of contrasts may find sufficient to entertain him in a study of the relative merits of Walwich Bay and its adjacent country—on the West Coast, and Delagoa Bay and the surrounding neighbourhood on the Eastern side. It is a matter of commendation that the Government have resolved to guard our trade at the former place as far as they can, and for that purpose intend to send Mr. Palgrave to look into affairs as they are now, with a view to effecting an early annexation. But we submit, that if our Government will likewise turn their attention, with as little delay as possible, to the expediency of having Delagoa Bay converted into a British port, they will do a very great good to the colony, far surpassing all we can expect from Walwich Bay, or, that by any possibility, can be realised. The reasons are obvious. Glance at the map for a few minutes, and argument for the preference becomes all but unnecessary. Looking at Walwich Bay, just above the tropic of Capricorn, and carrying the vision eastward, it travels over many degrees of a waste wilderness—at least, of what is as bad to us. The line of travel inward from the coast is up the beds of rivers, where water is scarce, the people barbarous, the cattle find refreshment with difficulty, life is isolated, and the further you go, the deeper you plunge into Savagedom, to make the acquaintance of a people who yield but little more than the form of article we mentioned in a previous notice ; to find civilization only farther and farther removed from you, and communication with the outer world grow more difficult and remote at every step. The hunting-fields have ceased to be attractive to the true sportsman ; the mining indications are rich, but too far from the coast to be available ; and, but for Damaras, Namaquas, Bechuanas, and nomadic Boers, the entire region would be left to the enjoyment of its indigenous occupants, the elephant, the lion, and the hyæna.

How different an aspect presents itself on the opposite coast, where Delagoa Bay is the golden mouth to one of the richest fields of the globe. So thickly is the frontier lined with roads, dotted with townships, and traversed by rivers,

that one naturally pauses to consider—what sort of a country this may be. Here the traveller can set his foot upon pleasant grass soon after landing. He may see around him all the evidence of a civilised community, which is in regular coast and inland postal communication with all the rest of advanced South Africa, as well as of other parts of the world. He can go to an office, book his seat, as in any part of the colony, and from what he sees of the map, find he can travel over good roads, and rest by easy stages, from Lorenzo Marques to the Gold Fields; or, if he will, by main postal route, through Leydenburg, to the seat of a Government of Europeans, Pretoria; and if he care, thence down southward, by comfortable, public, conveyance to Potchefstroom, the great mercantile centre of the Transvaal; hence on through Cronstadt, in the Free State, either to the capital, Bloemfontein, or branch off into Natal; or take the regular route through Bloemhof into Griqualand West. On nearly every hand, by Delagoa Bay, he has the resources of civilised life, and regular, frequent, cheap, safe, postal intercourse with all. If sport be his aim he can easily get at it. If a lovely land, or one to explore for minerals be his object, he has within a short distance of the coast, wood, coal, iron and copper in the most ample of stores, only awaiting capital to exhume them, and give them their mercantile value. If pastoral or agricultural aims be his, New Scotland and thousands of well cultivated acres will prove to him that he “may go farther and fare worse,” if he will not there invest his money. The magnificent cattle, of which the Transvaal is South Africa’s cradle and nursery, would gladden the eyes of any British farmer. Coffee, sugar, fruits of every description grow there in abundance; in fact, there is little indeed that will not thrive in this land—which you approach through Delagoa Bay. How different is this to the scene, and the prospects behind Walwich Bay! Shall we then, sit still, and in silence allow others to close the former to us by a compact with Portugal, except upon their terms?

If the colony is wise, its thoughtful and observant men will take steps, at the earliest moment possible, to induce the Legislature to express an opinion upon the subject—whether it would be advisable, in the interest of Great Britain in general, and of the British South African colonies in particular, to secure to the Empire such portion of Delagoa Bay as we require. On commercial, social, and political grounds we believe it to be not only expedient, but necessary, that our line of travel may be uninterrupted, our trade unchecked, our progress advanced, and our political situation strengthened.

THE TWO BAYS.—BRITAIN'S INTEREST.

One of the prominent instincts of our nature is that of self-preservation. It is one that affects all alike, "whether bond or free," civilised or barbarian. In all circumstances of life it exerts the first influence. Whether the cause be physical or imaginary,—whether the near approach to a precipice, or the doubtful character of a mercantile transaction be the object of fear at the moment, the individual likely to be injured, arouses his faculties to get away from it with all possible speed. But our Government appear blind to this peculiarity; they have, therefore, initiated proceedings for guarding the revenue of, and to prevent smuggling at a miserable, sandy, entrepôt to a great, wild, ugly, waste of desert, which is two-and-a-half degrees further from us, and that much nearer to the equator than—Delagoa Bay. The waters of the former have the fine, man-eating shark as a lively agitator; and tons of oil are gathered every year from the immense quantity of other fish caught there. One or two huts and wooden houses exist on a low spit, at the seaward edge of a two-mile sand plain. Three or four ships, direct from Europe, slip into the Bay each year, with full cargoes of firearms, ammunition, and general "truck," for sale to the natives and the wandering Boers, in exchange for feathers, ivory, and karosses. It is open to all the world, but few are they, except from Cape Town, who have any interest in that region. Once, or perhaps twice, a month, small craft run up from the latter port for the product of this trade—and cattle. These they drive south by months of careful travel, into the Colony. This delightful, important, attractive spot, on the West Coast, will be found marked on the map, just below the Southern tropic, and named—Walwich Bay. Galton, Chapman, Green, and Andersson have described this wretched place. Once the late Bishop of Cape Town contemplated a mission there for the Damaras, but the idea was only a passing one.

But the law of self-preservation, of protection, has at last aroused Cape Town to the expediency of interfering with our friends, mostly Swedish, who have for years had the Walwich Bay trade almost exclusively in their hands; and that is not agreeable to some, who think it time to get a portion of the crumbs. We did so, too, in 1831. It was noticed that the islands about Ichaboe yielded fat sums to a few folk every year, owing to their abundance of guano. They are half way between the western mouth of the Orange River and Walwich Bay. This Colony, therefore, had no control over them. They were capitally situated too, for running a contraband trade with coast natives. A Committee of the House of Assembly, with Mr. William Porter as Chairman, accordingly stated "That the Committee is of opinion that the annexation of the island of Ichaboe, and several smaller and neighbouring islands, to this Colony is necessary and expedient, and, therefore, commends the House to concur in annexing them."

"That the Committee consider that Her Majesty's dominion ought to be asserted over the following cluster of islands, namely, Ichaboe, Hollamsbird, Mercury, Long Island, Seal Island, Penguin Island, Halifax, Possession, Albatross Rock, Pomona, Plum-pudding and Roast Beef, or Sinclair's Island."

Thirteen or fourteen years later, this was fully accomplished : they were gathered into the Empire. Now, on a similar mission, Mr. Palgrave has been called down from Barkly to revisit the scenes of his former experiences in this sandy land, to prepare the way for the extension of British Colonial authority over the local trade. If this place be deemed of consequence to the Colony's welfare, to arrest contraband, the loss of revenue to the exchequer, and the prevention of mischief to our merchants, how infinitely greater is the need for Delagoa Bay to become a British port, instead of remaining in the possession of Portugal, to play into the hands of a not over scrupulous adjoining Government? Unless it become the property of England, a railway from it to the Transvaal will simply crush out at least one-half of the legitimate trade of Port Elizabeth, and the Colony generally. The shortest flight which the crow could make, from Bloemfontein to the sea, would be to the mouth of the Bashee, or Umtata River. But the Free State would not send its trade by that route. At the same distance lies Pretoria. Given—a railway from the latter place to Delagoa Bay, the Free Staters would have every inducement to carry goods and produce through the Transvaal, in spite of the long sea board they would have to pass, as it is thought that the extra cost by the latter would not equal the advantages to be derived from a nearly free port, through which all the back country could be supplied.

It may be argued that, with the railway to Cradock, on one side, and one from Cape Town, creeping to beyond Beaufort West, on the other, we should have nothing to fear. There are grave reasons to doubt this. If the crow-line between Cradock and Bloemfontein is not quite so long as from the latter to the Transvaal capital, the road is void of all the great advantages which favour the one between the two Republican seats of Government, which is level, grassy, and well watered. On the Cape side obstacles will be found in the increased cost for transit over so immeasurably great a length of barren country, as part of it will pass through, and the difficulties of the road between the terminus and the Free State. It is true the East London and Queen's Town line may intervene; but while we can run to a wholly, or nearly, free port, such as Delagoa Bay is to be, it will attract carriage *via* the Transvaal, the Free State, and so to the Native Tribes beyond them. In this way dealers may pour in such an amount of goods as must most naturally, affect the general trade of the country.

That President Burgers sees this, there is no doubt. That it has been one of the inducements to men who may have given the loan, we quite expect,—and that it will be realised we fully anticipate. We, therefore, think it is a subject of sufficient

importance to engage the immediate attention, not of the merchants of Port Elizabeth alone, but of Cape Town, and, of the Government; and, that as little time as possible be lost in trying to counteract the effects of Marshal McMahon's decision, secure Delagoa Bay to the Colony and to Great Britain—which is of far more consequence to us all than the sandspit, Walwich Bay, or the insignificant group of neighbouring Ichaboe dung islands ever can be.



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